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NSC BRIEFING

30 March 1955

FORMOSA STRAITS SITUATION

I. Chicoms have continued to mark time,  
both militarily and politically.

A. Military activity in past week  
limited to sporadic artillery  
exchanges in Quemoy area.

B. Matsu area quiet, except for  
Chinat air attack on nine small  
Chicom patrol craft (30 March).

C. Molotov said (25 March) USSR  
supports Peiping in refusal attend  
any conference on Formosa  
question in which Chinats repre-  
sented.

II. Comms may intend delay both military  
and political moves until assess  
support at Asian-African conference  
beginning 18 April.

A. Comms probably hope conference

endorse Chicom claim to Chinat

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- B. Another possible factor in lull is unresolved dispute among Soviet leaders, or between Moscow-Peiping, on certain aspects Formosa question.

III. Uncertain whether lull will continue.

- A. Recent press reports of massive Comm buildup in East China untrue.
- B. However, Chicoms long capable of initiating military action against Matsus and Quemoy without further buildup and with little warning.

IV. Chicoms may elect to ready Fukien air bases before undertaking large-scale action against islands.

- A. However, any one of five Fukien bases could be readied in 10 days.
- B. Comms can already put entire Quemoy group--including all 18 beaches--

under heavy artillery fire

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V. Chicom may believe best course is to refrain from all-out attack, thus avoid direct challenge to US.

A. May plan to limit operations to artillery bombardment, air attacks, seizure of small outposts.

VI. Such policy, in Comm view, would reduce danger of US retaliation.

A. However, Comms have been preparing for possible US action.

B. Peiping's propaganda continues exhort people to stand firm against US threats, including threat of nuclear weapons.

C. Moreover, Khrushchev recently told diplomat that, if CommChina were "attacked," USSR would honor 1950 treaty.

D. In past Soviet leaders much more evasive in references to treaty.

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